

**June 2008**

## MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

June is Michigan Horse Racing Month and we are celebrating. There are so many amazing things happening in the Michigan horseracing industry. We have three tracks running live racing - Hazel Park, Jackson and Mount Pleasant Meadows. The weather has been good enough to allow for some great afternoons and evenings out at the track. Thank you to Hazel Park for the wonderful evening celebrating horse racing month. I personally love the pens with the "June is Horseracing Month" tag line! Congratulations to Jackson Harness Raceway as it celebrates 60 years of horseracing. As well, great job on having a four-page spread in the entertainment magazine, "Noise". What a fantastic highlight of harness racing in Michigan! Mount Pleasant Meadows held a fun-filled day showing the youth all about horseracing. I am so glad we give the opportunity to a new generation to learn about and enjoy all that our industry has to offer. We have one sad note here at ORC, Kenn Christopher, our special projects administrator will be retiring at the end of the summer. Kenn's enthusiasm and knowledge of the horse racing industry has been a valuable asset not only to our office but also to Michigan's industry for over 30 years. Although we will miss him, the ORC wishes Kenn all the best. However, I am pleased to announce a new team member to ORC. We recently hired Pollyanne Kapala as ORC's Simulcast Specialist. The focus of the Office of Racing Commissioner has historically been on live racing. While this remains a priority for our office, we also see the economic value of simulcasting as it provides a great amount of income to our industry. As such, Polly will be focussing her time on the issues surrounding simulcasting.



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## PINNACLE RACE COURSE LICENSING

Pinnacle Race Course is on track (yes- the pun is intended!) to run its first race on July 18th. We have begun to make preparations for the ORC office on site. As construction will still be under way, we will be housed in a temporary facility (trailer). Due to the nature of construction, we do not have a definite date that our on-site office will be open. However, we will make every effort to have all licenses processed and have everyone ready for racing. Information regarding licensing at Pinnacle and anyone participating at the track, along with all necessary forms are located on the front page of our website. Please make sure to check [www.michigan.gov/horseracing](http://www.michigan.gov/horseracing) for all of the latest details about the ORC office at Pinnacle. In addition, the ORC will be hiring a few additional staff to fill any gaps. It is imperative that we work together and give the public the correct information regarding licensing at Pinnacle. If you are unsure about any part of the process, please direct those questions to the Lansing office. It is encouraged that you do not send anyone to the other tracks to be licensed so not to create unnecessary havoc. There will be plenty of time to get everyone licensed and ready to go before the first race.

## PUBLIC HEARING

The ORC held a public hearing to receive testimony regarding the rule changes for furosemide, track condition and the thoroughbred maiden rule. The furosemide rule eliminates the word "lasix" and allows trainers to more efficiently manage their horse's need for controlled medications. The track conditions rule will now provide more flexibility and firm up the policy on having a committee decide whether the track is safe to race on (when weather is a factor) thereby having more consistency among the racetracks. The maiden age rule raises the thoroughbred maiden age from 5 to 7 years. Written testimony regarding these rules will be taken until June 30th. For the complete wording of these rules, visit our website at [www.michigan.gov/horseracing](http://www.michigan.gov/horseracing).

## CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS

As a result of the tragic death of Eight Belles at the Kentucky Derby, Congress heard testimony on June 19 regarding the safety of race horses both on and off the tracks. The safety of the horses has always been a priority for the ORC. At the same time, we recognize that we can be doing more to safeguard the horses and the horsemen. As such, we are beginning to review our policies that deal with placing horses on the vet's list, participate in vet trainings and working with our lab to enhance our testing capabilities. The ORC sees this as another opportunity to increase the integrity of the sport while protecting the well-being of all of those involved.

## ORC WEBSITE

If you haven't been to our site lately, now is the time to stop by. We are continually updating the information on the site to serve you better. Bookmark us and check back often. [www.michigan.gov/horseracing](http://www.michigan.gov/horseracing)



The logo was created courtesy of Debbie Pletzer, FOURSIGHT Creative Group, Inc. of Plymouth, Michigan [www.foursightcreative.com](http://www.foursightcreative.com)

## HEAT STROKE AND YOUR HORSE

Heat stroke can become a very serious condition for your horse's health. If you suspect your horse is showing signs, call your veterinarian immediately. Initial treatment of heat exhaustion is aimed at cooling the horse down. Remove all equipment including all harness and blinkers, apply cool water to the horse with a bucket or hose and concentrate on the neck and inside the legs. Make sure to continually remove water with a sweat scraper, as it will warm quickly from the horse's skin and trap heat. Offer only small amounts of water and apply ice packs to the neck. If possible, move the horse out of the sun and in front of a fan. For more information about heat stroke, visit the Horse Health section of our website - [www.michigan.gov/horseracing](http://www.michigan.gov/horseracing).



## EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH ORC

**Veterinarians** - Part-time positions rotating where needed among all six tracks

**Veterinarian Technicians** - One at Mount Pleasant Meadows and one at Pinnacle

For more information regarding these positions, visit our website at [www.michigan.gov/horseracing](http://www.michigan.gov/horseracing).

## LIVING HALL OF FAME

We are very pleased to announce that Charles "Chuck" Coon will be inducted into the Harness Racing Living Hall of Fame. The induction ceremonies will take place during the weekend of July 5 and 6 in New York. Mr. Coon is a native of Michigan and became harness racing's premier innovator in race-track design, construction and maintenance, and starting gates during his 40-plus year career in harness racing. Congratulations Mr. Coon from all of us here in Michigan!